

HEALTH-PROMOTING EFFECTS OF VISITS TO GREEN SPACE – CASE STUDIES IN KUALA LUMPUR AND KUCHING, MALAYSIA

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Background and Aims: Major Malaysian cities such as Kuala Lumpur (Peninsular Malaysia) and Kuching (Sarawak) have been experiencing rapid development. The importance of green spaces as a contributor to the better quality of a resident's life has been recognized, though data on the use of green spaces and resulting benefits are still lacking. This paper presents results from a comparative study on the use of green spaces and visitor preferences for five selected parks located in Kuala Lumpur and Kuching. The study comprised, among others, a survey which conducted among residents living within two kilometre radius from the park boundaries.

Methods: A part of the survey focused on health promoting aspects of urban green spaces. Questions related to self-reported health status were proposed, which enabled a comparison between visitors and non-visitors to the nearby park. Moreover, respondents were also asked about the activities that they would recommend their close friends or family members should they experience stress or anxiety.

Results: A total of 1692 respondents answered the questionnaire. Result shown that most of the people who spend time visiting the neighbouring park claimed that they are in good health, while a larger share of people who do not spend time visiting the park reported that they are in conversely poor health condition. Respondents who live within 300m from the park reported that they are in better health condition than that of respondents who live far away. Most of respondents suggested that their close friends and family members go for vacation or involve themselves in sports/outdoor activities should they experience stress or anxiety.

Conclusions: This research claimed most people healthier because they visit green spaces frequently and these results had drawn attention to the importance of green spaces to human health, confirming the findings of studies from other parts of the world. Hence, decision makers and green space managers should consider and incorporate this health promoting role of green spaces in their activities.

References:

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